share of export in the international market was 0.6% in 1997. The policy of import substitution followed prior to liberalisation was largely responsible for this low share.

(c) Export performance is influenced *inter-alia* by international market conditions supporing infrastructural facilities, credit availability and policy framework. The Government is taking all necessary steps to see that there is a steady increase in the growth of exports. Export promotion is a continuous process and measures are being taken based on interaction with trade, industry and export promotion orgnisations.

Trade Between India and Erstwhile U.S.S.R.

468. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the annual trade between India and the erstwhile Soviet Union before its disintegration;

(b) the value of trade between India and the countries of erst-while Soviet Union during 1996–97;

(c) whether it is a fact that there has been decline in the trade;

(d) if so, the main items in which the decline in trade has occurred; and

(e) the steps taken to increase trade between India and these countries?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) The value of trade between India and erstwhile Soviet Union during 1990-91 was Rs. 7803 crores.

(b) The value of trade between India and CIS and Baltic countries during 1996-97 was Rs. 5829 crores.

(c) and (d) Yes Sir, there was a decline in trade with the countries of erstwhile Soviet Union during 1996-97 as compared to the trade with Soviet Union before its disintegration. The main items in which the decline in trade has occurred include tea, coffee, cashew, cosmetics and toiletries, chemicals, pulp and waste paper, cotton raw and waste, fertilizers manufactured, iron and steel, etc.

(e) The Government has initiated several measures for boosting Indo-CIS trade. These measures include regular review of trade between India and the countries of this region through meetings of Joint Commission, Working Groups and Joint business councils, encouraging consignment sales and opening of warehouses; broad-basing the basket of tradable goods, signing of agreements, opening of India banks, participation in trade fairs and exhibitions and exchange of delegations.

Software Exports to Japan

469. SHRI DEBABRATA BISWAS: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total value of the software exports to Japan during the years 1994-95, 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98;

(b) whether there is any steady increase in the volume of exports to Japan during these four years; and

(c) what further steps are being contemplated to continue this trend so as to increase the software exports not only to Japan but also to the entire South East Asian Markets?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) The total value of software exports to Japan during the last 4 years has been as under:-

Year	Rs. in Cr.
1994-95	46
1995-96	53
1996-97	109
1997-98	185 (estimated)

(b) Yes, Sir. There has been a steady increase in the value of exports to Japan during the last 4 years. The growth over the previous years has been as under:-

Year	%Growth
1994-95	76.9
1995-96	15.2
1996-97	105.6
1997-98	69.7

(c) The Council has undertaken various promotional activities to boost export to South

East Asian countries in general and Japan in particular. They include inviting delegations from Japan under Asian Co-operation programme through JETRO, Participating in Data Shows/COMJAPAN being held in Tokyo since 1994-95, sending delegations from India to Japan arranging contacts with Indian software companies for representatives of Japanese companies visiting India, exploring the possibility of export to Japan through Contract Manufacturing, carring on market surveys for the South East Asian countries.

Tax on DEPB Credits

470. SHRI DEBABRATA BISWAS: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that several State Governments are imposing tax on the import entitlements earned by the Indian Exporters under the DEPB (Duty Entitlement Pass Book) Scheme with the reult that the very objective of the DEPB Scheme are being defeated;

(b) if so, the basis on which the State Governments are imposting tax on DEPB credit which are only reimbursements of the customs duty on inputs; and

(c) the steps which Government propose to take to correct the situtation so that volume of export trade is not adversely affected?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) Duty Entitlement Pass book entitles an exporter to claim duty free credit as a percentage of the FOB value of exports. The exporter can import the goods duty free upto the DEPB credit entitlement. The DEPB credit entitlement is freely transferable which can also be sold/ transferred. Some of the State Governments have levied sales tax when the DEPB is sold/ transferred by holding transfer of DEPB as the sale of 'goods'.

(c) The Central Government has requested the State Governments to consider the exemption of Sales tax on the sale/transfer of the DEPB credit entitlement.

Corruption Charges in Soyabean Meal Deal in STC

471. SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Board Level Officers are facing corruption chages regarding export of Soyabean meal recelty;

(b) whether it is a fact that finance and audit division of STC have revealed that there has been losses of Rs. 15 crores in these trading operations;

(c) what action has Government taken against STC officials responsible for these fraudulent losses to the company;

(d) whether Government have referred to CBI the whole issue; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) No, Sr.

(b) The trading loss on export of extractions which include repeseed, soyabean meal, groundnut meal etc. on an export of 1.93 lakh MTs and domestic trade of 0.61 lakh MTs during the financial year 1997-98 is provisionally estimated to be Rs. 9.83 cores.

(c) No loss on account of fraudulent deed has been reported by STC.

(d) No. Sir.

(e) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Impact of Pressure from W.T.O. and I.M.F.

472. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the impact of pressure from W.T.O. and I.M.F. on Agriculture and Textiles sector;

(b) whether India propose to remove all its import restraints on textile products in phased manner;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps proposed in selection to W.T.O. obligations?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) There is no pressure from either the World Trade